

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Daily Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

February 8, 2010

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Secretary Clinton Praises Diligence, Diplomacy of Northern Ireland Leaders

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington -- The agreement by Northern Ireland's two biggest political parties to have the Northern Ireland Assembly assume control over policing and justice powers is "another important step toward a full and lasting peace," says Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Clinton added that she has invited Northern Ireland leaders to Washington to discuss ways to build upon the agreement and promote peace through private sector investment.

"This latest success in Northern Ireland points the way forward -- and not only for this one conflict. Northern Ireland gives us hope that, despite entrenched opposition and innumerable setbacks, diligent diplomacy and committed leadership can overcome generations of suspicion and hostility," Clinton said in a February 5 statement.

The February 5 accord between the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Fein resolves a long-standing dispute between the two parties on the timetable for the transfer of policing and justice powers, known as devolution, from the British Parliament to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The two parties agreed to a March 9 vote in the assembly to devolve those powers beginning April 12.

"The accord they reached today will help consolidate the hard-won gains of the past decade," Clinton said.

She praised DUP leader and Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson and Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness, who serves as deputy first minister, for displaying "the kind of leadership that the people of Northern Ireland deserve." She also invited both leaders to join her and U.S. Economic Envoy to Northern Ireland Declan Kelly in Washington "to discuss further investment in Northern Ireland and ways to build on this agreement."

In her statement, Clinton recognized the "leadership and patient resolve" of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) Brian Cowen, Northern Ireland Secretary Shaun Woodward and Irish Foreign Minister Micheál Martin, who have "stayed resolutely focused on moving this process forward."

"I know that at times the path forward was far from clear. So I want to applaud all the parties for ultimately choosing negotiation over confrontation," she said.

It is "not the end of the journey," and a "new chapter of partnership" in Northern Ireland must now begin, she said. "I want to reaffirm the commitment of the United States -- and my personal commitment as well -- to support Northern Ireland in every way we can."

When Secretary Clinton addressed a full session of the Northern Ireland Assembly in Belfast on October 12, 2009, she pledged that the United States is "committed to helping you finish your journey," including efforts to provide greater economic opportunities. "We intend to increase our economic engagement," including more business-to-business collaboration between U.S. and Northern Irish companies, she said.

A senior Obama administration official who asked not to be identified told reporters February 5 that Clinton has been in regular contact with leaders in Northern Ireland over the past year, using her role as a diplomat and as a former politician to "speak frankly with the parties about the considerations that they faced and how they could work through them to display leadership, even in the face of certain challenges and constraints."

She discussed ways they could "leverage the benefits of this accord" for the people of Northern Ireland, and pledged U.S. support for economic investment so that once an agreement was reached, it would "pay dividends that would result in better opportunities."

"The more that the people of Northern Ireland see their lives changed and improved and their opportunities increased because of the peace and stability that has been brought about by this series of agreements, the more likely the momentum continues," the official said.

The overall role of the United States is to facilitate, support and encourage the parties and "to provide support beyond mere encouragement through the economic envoy," Declan Kelly, who the official said has strong ties on both sides of the Atlantic and years of experience in promoting investment.

But "the United States is here to support the deal more than do the deal," he added, and the credit "really goes to parties themselves and then to the British and Irish governments."

Secretary Clinton on Attacks Against Iraqi Shi'a Pilgrims

Says United States condemns series of attacks against religious pilgrimage

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
February 5, 2010

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

Attacks on Iraqi Shi'a Pilgrims

The United States condemns the series of bombing attacks against Shi'a pilgrims in Iraq over the past week. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. Attacking men, women and children engaged in religious pilgrimage is reprehensible and exposes the cynical immorality of the terrorists who seek to replace Iraq's hard-won progress with violence and intimidation. They will not succeed in breaking the will of the Iraqi people. Iraqis are committed to realizing the promise of their democracy. There is no better rebuke to those who traffic in terror.

Under Secretary Ellen Tauscher on Nuclear Disarmament

Obama embraces vision of a world without nuclear weapons

U.S. Department of State
Ellen Tauscher
Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security
Paris, France
February 3, 2010

As prepared

Global Zero Summit

Thank you. It's an honor to be here in Paris at the Global Zero Summit and see so many old friends. Many of you have known and worked with me when I served as a member of Congress from California and it's an honor to be here today representing the Obama administration.

I want to thank Richard Burt for this invitation and I want to thank all of those who are here today that I have worked with in the past. Thank you for your patriotism and your hard work.

I want to recognize the Student Movement and its leaders who are a part of this conference. Thank you for your passion and engagement.

I know Global Zero has set itself an ambitious goal of wanting to eliminate nuclear weapons during the next 20 years.

The goal is admirable, and I thank you for the time and energy each and every one of you is putting into this effort.

The nuclear arms race that characterized the Cold War cast a shadow over the lives of people everywhere—especially those living in Europe and the United States.

But today there is universal agreement that, as Secretary Clinton said last week in this great city, "People everywhere have the right to live free from the fear of nuclear destruction."

And President Obama set forth an ambitious agenda in his speech in Prague last year. The president has embraced the vision of John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan of calling for a world without nuclear weapons.

Those are not just abstract words for him. This issue animates the president, it's not one of those issues that an aide had to tell him about. He has put his political capital and muscle behind that vision.

But he acknowledged then, just as he did in his statement to you yesterday, that it would not be easy and that it will take a long time. It will likely will exceed twenty years and that it might not happen in his lifetime.

Nuclear disarmament is not the Holy Grail. It's only worth pursuing in so far as it increases our national security.

I believe that the journey on the road to zero is perhaps more important – than the goal itself.

It's those concrete steps that we take that will enhance the national security of the United States and make the world a more stable place.

So just don't look at what we say, look at what we're going to do over the next few months.

We're at the end game of negotiating a new arms reduction treaty with Russia. Nobody said this was going to be easy and as someone who has negotiated a few deals in my day, this is one that isn't very contentious or complicated.

Both sides are working well together and if the measure of a good deal is that both sides are willing to do another deal, then we're in good shape.

As President Obama said in his statement to you the other day, "this is just a start."

On March 1, the Obama administration will release its Nuclear Posture Review, which will reduce role and number of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy. For the first time, there has been significant State Department participation in the Nuclear Posture Review. We have made sure to fully address all matters relating to our nuclear posture. We also have spent a significant amount of time consulting our allies because it is our goal to strengthen their security as well.

At April's Nuclear Security Summit, the President will bring 44 nations together to advance his goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years, so that they never fall into the hands of terrorists.

In May, we will strengthen the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime at the Review Conference and work with allies and partners to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of every nation are enforced.

We are also working to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty to halt fissile material production, so that we don't add to global stockpiles of highly enriched uranium or weapons grade plutonium.

And, when we're ready, we will ask the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Looking back, the United States and, for that matter, Russia, have not gotten enough credit for the steps we have taken to disarm. They have been substantial even though we all know we have a long way to go.

There's also reason to look up.

More than 180 countries have foresworn nuclear weapons. More countries have given up or been denied nuclear weapons programs than those that have acquired weapons over the past 40 years.

That's why we cannot let our guard down now. My friends, George Schultz, Bill Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn, who some call the Four Horsemen or the Four Wise Men have compared the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons to the summit of a very tall mountain.

It's hard to see that peak from where we stand today, and so we first must make forward progress that allows us to see that goal as attainable and realistic. We have a long journey ahead of us and it's a journey that won't be easy, but with your help and your energy I believe that we can get there.

Thank you very much.

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